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POLITICAL

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4. President "Reminds" Military Officers To Stay Out Of Politics

With the continued appearance of press speculation on presidenciables, including some military officers such as Minister of Defense Enrique PERALTA and fledgling candidate Abundio MALDONADO, the Ministry of Defense, under instructions from President Ydígoras, issued an order this week "reminding" military officers that the Constitution clearly prohibits them from engaging in political activity. The order requested officers who are mentioned as potential candidates to make public denials or "clarifications" and pointed out that any officer who wanted to become a candidate would be free to do so after requesting retirement from active duty. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Major Maldonado has already submitted his resignation from the Army, stepping up his schedule somewhat (WEEKA 38). Minister of Defense Peralta, an Army Colonel, who has figured prominently in speculations as to future candidates, has not yet been heard from. Ydígoras, with his reminder, could be attempting to put the squeeze on Peralta, who as Minister of Defense is known to believe that it might be necessary to stage a preventive coup against Arévalo, which of course, would tumble Ydígoras in the process. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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